

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (previously presented) An information processing apparatus, comprising:

a customer data unit operable to receive a registration code identifying a purchased product and information relating to a purchaser of the product that are inputted by the purchaser when the purchaser seeks to register the product, to determine whether the registration code is correct, to determine whether a customer identifier is associated with the purchaser information when the registration code is correct, to obtain the customer identifier when the customer identifier is not already associated with the purchaser information, and to store the purchaser information and the registration code in association with the customer identifier;

a questionnaire data storage unit operable to receive and store purchaser responses that the purchaser has inputted in response to a first questionnaire, the first questionnaire being available to the purchaser at a time the purchaser provides the registration code and the purchaser information, to transmit a second questionnaire to the purchaser at a predetermined time subsequent to the receipt and storage of the registration code and the purchaser information, and to receive and store purchaser responses that the purchaser has inputted in response to the second questionnaire; and

a questionnaire data processing unit operable to receive the stored purchaser information, registration code and customer identifier from said customer data unit, to determine whether said questionnaire data storage unit is to transmit an interview questionnaire to the purchaser based on at least part of the purchaser information, to combine the purchaser responses to at least one of the

first questionnaire, the second questionnaire, and the interview questionnaire with responses obtained from other purchasers, and to output data based on the combined responses.

2. (cancelled)

3. (cancelled)

4. (previously presented) An information processing method, comprising:

receiving a registration code identifying a purchased product and information relating to a purchaser of the product that are inputted by the purchaser when the purchaser seeks to register the product;

determining whether the registration code is correct;

determining whether a customer identifier is associated with the purchaser information when the registration code is correct;

obtaining the customer identifier when the customer identifier is not already associated with the purchaser information;

storing the purchaser information and the registration code in association with the customer identifier;

receiving and storing purchaser responses that the purchaser has inputted in response to a first questionnaire, the first questionnaire being available to the purchaser at a time the purchaser provides the registration code and the purchaser information;

transmitting a second questionnaire to the purchaser at a predetermined time subsequent to the receipt and storage of the registration code and the purchaser information;

receiving and storing purchaser responses that the purchaser has inputted in response to the second questionnaire;

determining whether to transmit an interview questionnaire to the purchaser based on at least part of the purchaser information;

combining the purchaser responses to at least one of the first questionnaire, the second questionnaire, and the interview questionnaire with responses obtained from other purchasers; and

outputting data based on the combined responses.

5. (previously presented) A recording medium recorded with a computer-readable program for carrying out an information processing method, said method comprising:

receiving a registration code identifying a purchased product and information relating to a purchaser of the product that are inputted by the purchaser when the purchaser seeks to register the product;

determining whether the registration code is correct;

determining whether a customer identifier is associated with the purchaser information when the registration code is correct;

obtaining the customer identifier when the customer identifier is not already associated with the purchaser information;

storing the purchaser information and the registration code in association with the customer identifier;

receiving and storing purchaser responses that the purchaser has inputted in response to a first questionnaire, the first questionnaire being available to the purchaser at a time the purchaser provides the registration code and the purchaser information;

transmitting a second questionnaire to the purchaser at a predetermined time subsequent to the receipt and storage of the registration code and the purchaser information;

receiving and storing purchaser responses that the purchaser has inputted in response to the second questionnaire;

determining whether to transmit an interview questionnaire to the purchaser based on at least part of the purchaser information;

combining the purchaser responses to at least one of the first questionnaire, the second questionnaire, and the interview questionnaire with responses obtained from other purchasers; and

outputting data based on the combined responses.

6. (previously presented) The information processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

a customer identifier providing unit operable to receive a request for the customer identifier from said customer data unit, and to provide the customer identifier to said customer data unit in response to the request.

7. (previously presented) The information processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

a conversion unit operable to convert the stored purchaser information, registration code, and customer identifier into a format suitable for said questionnaire data processing unit, and to convert the purchaser responses to the at least one of the first questionnaire, the second questionnaire, and the interview questionnaire into the format suitable for said questionnaire data processing unit.

8. (currently amended) The information processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

a call center terminal operable to receive a subject of a customer inquiry together with the customer identifier;

a call center database ~~unit~~ operable to receive the

customer identifier from said call center terminal, to receive the stored purchaser information, registration code and customer identifier from said customer data unit, and to output the purchaser information and the registration code to said call center terminal in response to the received customer identifier; and

an answer collection database unit~~unit~~ operable to receive the subject of the customer inquiry and the customer identifier from said call center terminal, and to determine whether an answer associated with the customer inquiry is recorded in said answer collection database, the determination being based on the subject of the customer inquiry;

said answer collection database, when the associated answer is recorded in said answer collection database, being further operable to increment an inquiry count for the associated answer, to output a~~reply~~the associated answer to the customer inquiry to said call center terminal ~~based on the subject of the customer inquiry,~~ and to send the customer identifier, the customer inquiry, and the associated answer ~~reply~~ to said call center data unit;

said call center terminal being further operable to display the associated answer;

said call center database unit~~unit~~ being further operable to store the customer inquiry and the associated answer ~~reply~~ in correlation association~~association~~ with the customer identifier.

9. (currently amended) The information processing apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising:

a call center data processing unit operable to receive the stored customer inquiry and the stored associated answer ~~reply~~ from said call center data unit, and to combine information based on the customer inquiry and the

associated answer ~~reply~~ with other information based on other customer inquiries and their associated answers ~~replies~~ that are received from said call center data unit, and to output data based on the combined information.

10. (previously presented) The method according to claim 4, further comprising:

converting the stored purchaser information, registration code, and customer identifier into a suitable format; and

converting the purchaser responses to the one or more of the first questionnaire, the second questionnaire, and the interview questionnaire into the suitable format.

11. (currently amended) The method according to claim 4, further comprising:

receiving, at a call center terminal, a subject of a customer inquiry together with the customer identifier;

receiving, at a call center database ~~unit~~, the customer identifier from the call center terminal;

receiving, at the call center database ~~unit~~, the stored purchaser information, registration code and customer identifier;

outputting, from the call center database ~~unit~~ to the call center terminal, the purchaser information and the registration code in response to the received customer identifier;

receiving, at an answer collection database ~~unit~~, the subject of the customer inquiry and the customer identifier from the call center terminal;

determining, at the answer collection database, whether an answer associated with the customer inquiry is recorded in the answer collection database, the determination being based on the subject of the customer inquiry; and

when the associated answer is recorded in the answer collection database,

incrementing, at the answer collection database, an inquiry count for the associated answer,

outputting, from the answer collection database unit to the call center terminal, a ~~reply~~ the associated answer to the customer inquiry, ~~based on the subject of the customer inquiry,~~

displaying the associated answer at the call center terminal,

sending, from the answer collection database unit to the call center database unit, the customer identifier, the customer inquiry, and the associated answer, ~~reply,~~ and

storing, at the call center database unit, the customer inquiry and the associated answer ~~reply~~ in association-correlation with the customer identifier.

12. (currently amended) The method according to claim 11, further comprising:

combining, at a call center data processing unit, information based on the customer inquiry and the associated answer ~~reply~~ with other information based on other customer inquiries and their associated answers~~replies~~; and

outputting, from the call center data processing unit, data based on the combined information.

13. (previously presented) The recording medium according to claim 5, wherein said method further comprises:

converting the stored purchaser information, registration code, and customer identifier into a suitable format; and

converting the purchaser responses to the at least one of the first questionnaire, the second questionnaire, and the interview questionnaire into the suitable format.

14. (currently amended) The recording medium according to claim 5, wherein said method further comprises:

receiving, at a call center terminal, a subject of a customer inquiry together with the customer identifier;

receiving, at a call center database—unit, the customer identifier from the call center terminal;

receiving, at the call center database—unit, the stored purchaser information, registration code and customer identifier;

outputting, from the call center database unit—to the call center terminal, the purchaser information and the registration code in response to the received customer identifier;

receiving, at an answer collection databaseunit, the subject of the customer inquiry and the customer identifier from the call center terminal;

determining, at the answer collection database, whether an answer associated with the customer inquiry is recorded in the answer collection database, the determination being based on the subject of the customer inquiry; and

when the associated answer is recorded in the answer collection database,

incrementing, at the answer collection database, an inquiry count for the associated answer,

outputting, from the answer collection database unit to the call center terminal, a reply—the associated answer to the customer inquiry,—based on the subject of the customer inquiry;

displaying the associated answer at the call center terminal,

sending, from the answer collection database unit—to the call center database—unit, the customer identifier, the

customer inquiry, and the associated answer, ~~reply~~, and storing, at the call center database—~~unit~~, the customer inquiry and the associated answer ~~reply~~—in ~~association~~—correlation with the customer identifier.

15. (currently amended) The recording medium according to claim 14, wherein said method further comprises:

combining, at a call center data processing unit, information based on the customer inquiry and the associated answer ~~reply~~—with other information based on other customer inquiries and their associated answers~~replies~~; and

outputting, from the call center data processing unit, data based on the combined information.

16. (previously presented) An information processing system, comprising:

a terminal operable to display a menu that permits a purchaser to select between registering a purchased product and responding to a first questionnaire, to display one or more screens suitable for obtaining a registration code identifying the purchased product and information relating to the purchaser of the product that are inputted by the purchaser when the purchaser selects registering the purchased product, and to display one or more screens suitable for obtaining responses to the first questionnaire that are inputted by the purchaser when the purchaser selects responding to the first questionnaire; and

an information processing apparatus including:

a customer data unit operable to receive the registration code identifying the purchased product and the information relating to the purchaser of the product from the terminal, to determine whether the registration code is correct, to determine whether a customer identifier is associated with the purchaser information when the

registration code is correct, to obtain such customer identifier when the customer identifier is not already associated therewith, and to store the purchaser information and the registration code in association with the customer identifier,

a questionnaire data storage unit operable to receive and store the purchaser responses to the first questionnaire, to transmit a second questionnaire to the purchaser at a subsequent predetermined time, and to receive and store purchaser responses that are inputted by the purchaser in response to the second questionnaire, and

a questionnaire data processing unit operable to receive the stored purchaser information, registration code and customer identifier from said customer data unit, to determine whether said questionnaire data storage unit is to transmit an interview questionnaire to the purchaser based on at least part of the purchaser information, to combine the purchaser responses to one or more of the first questionnaire, the second questionnaire, and the interview questionnaire with responses obtained from other purchasers, and to provide data based on the combined responses.